

We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution National Invitational

Rules and Eligibility for Academic Year 2025–2026

These rules govern the eligibility criteria and participation guidelines for the We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution National Invitational during the 2025–2026 academic year. The National Invitational offers **high school and middle school** classes or clubs the opportunity to participate in simulated congressional hearings at the national level within a supportive, **virtual** environment.

The term *invitational* reflects the spirit of community and civic engagement rather than strict qualification. The event welcomes new and returning teams from across the country in a virtual, low-barrier setting that emphasizes learning, participation, and public discourse.

Team Eligibility

- **Rostered Classes:**
All rostered classes, regardless of size, are encouraged to participate in the We the People National Invitational.
- **After-School Clubs:**
After-school clubs are also eligible to participate, especially from states or schools where We the People is still developing. The Center strongly encourages clubs to work toward becoming rostered classes over time; however, club teams are welcome at the National Invitational regardless of their prior state participation.
- **Previous Participation:**
Teams that have previously participated in school-wide, regional, district, or state-level We the People competitions are eligible for the National Invitational. New teams without prior competitive experience are also encouraged to attend, especially if they are seeking a first-time national experience in a low-pressure environment.



Individual Student Eligibility

- All middle school and high school students are eligible to participate in the We the People National Invitational, regardless of prior experience with the program.
 - Students may participate in the National Invitational more than once during their academic careers. For example, a student may compete at the middle school level and later return at the high school level or participate in multiple years while enrolled in the same level.
 - Participation in the National Invitational does not affect a student's eligibility to compete in the National Finals, which is a separate event.
-

Team Composition

- There is no required minimum or maximum team size for the National Invitational.¹ The format is flexible to accommodate a wide variety of classroom and club structures.
- Each team must respond to all six unit questions. To do so, the team should be divided into six groups, with each group assigned to testify on one unit.
- Each group is encouraged to include at least three students, and group sizes should be as evenly distributed as possible. However, in small teams, students may participate in more than one unit as needed.
- The same principles of collaboration, preparation, and respectful discourse apply to teams of all sizes.

¹ Note: The participation fee is the same regardless of team size.



Team Selection Process

- State coordinators may sign their teams up directly for the We the People National Invitational by completing the Center's official National Invitational Interest Form. Participation is open to both new and returning programs.
 - In the event that there is no state coordinator for We the People in a particular state, teachers may contact the Center.
 - To ensure broad national representation, the Center may limit participation to no more than three schools per state. If more than three schools from a single state express interest, the Center will work with state coordinators to include additional teams from their state and prioritize geographic and programmatic diversity.
 - To encourage broader participation, only one class per individual school may participate in the National Invitational.
-

Competition Format

- The We the People National Invitational takes place virtually via Zoom. Each team is assigned its own Zoom room for the duration of the event day. Judges rotate into rooms to conduct simulated congressional hearings with each unit group.
- Teams may choose to travel to Washington, D.C., or any other venue during the National Invitational. They will still compete over Zoom.
- The format mirrors the in-person National Finals, featuring guest judges, structured hearings, and follow-up questions, which offer students the opportunity to showcase their understanding of constitutional principles and civil discourse.
- Awards are presented to the first, second, and third-place teams at both the high school and middle school levels. Additional awards recognize outstanding performance in individual units within each division.